

VZCZCXRO5817
RR RUEHDE RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHAE #0127 1120842
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 220842Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0259
INFO RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL
RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ
RHRMDAB/COMUSNAVCENT
RUZEFAA/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 000127

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/21/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [SO](#) [ER](#)
SUBJECT: ARS "PATRIOTIC WING" GRASPS FOR RELEVANCE

REF: ASMARA 117

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for reason 1.4(d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Members of the "patriotic wing" of the Aweys faction of the ARS told Emboffs they were disappointed with the Somali Parliament's decision to implement sharia law, asserting that the majority of Somalis are against sharia and the law only passed due to fear of reprisal. The patriotic wing delegation, led by Ambassador Hashi, asked for USG support in forming a Patriotic Front that would formally split from Islamists in the ARS. The delegation also mentioned Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys had returned to Asmara on April 18 and would most likely be travelling to Somalia, eventually, to join the Islamists. End Summary.

"SOMALIS DON'T WANT SHARIA"

12. (C) Ambassador Hashi, chair of the Aweys faction Foreign Relations committee, insisted that Somalis do not need sharia law at this time, adding that the majority of the country is against sharia. When asked why the bill passed unanimously with no opposition from stakeholders, he simply replied the populace is too frightened to object. Despite the delegation's insistence that Somalia needs a plan for comprehensive infrastructure rather than sharia law, the group was unable to produce its own plans for stability, stating "we are still working on it."

FROM ARS RUMP TO PATRIOTIC FRONT

13. (C) Hashi also relayed that the patriotic wing of the ARS will soon formally split with the remaining Islamist members. Hashi and his colleagues specifically avoided talk of numbers. He gave no indication as to how many Aweys faction members are still in country and how many of them are patriotic or Islamist. Nonetheless, he requested USG assistance in forming the Patriotic Front, which would be a new political entity splintered from the rump ARS in Asmara. Hashi also mentioned that the group's Inspector General, Mahad Yusuf, will travel to Somalia in the near future to garner support for the soon-to-be formed Patriotic Front. Two members had already left for Somalia, according to Hashi.

AWEYS' FUTURE ROLE?

14. (C) According to the delegation, Sheikh Aweys returned to

Asmara April 18 and would be leaving for Somalia "to join his constituency, Hezbul Islam." Mahad Yusuf also alleged that Aweys would no longer be in charge of the rump ARS agenda and would soon be written out of the group. Ambassador Hashi hastily backtracked and gave a more vague timeline, stating that this would happen in the future, but not right now.

15. (C) COMMENT: The ARS patriotic wing is in a desperate battle for relevance. The recent de-grouping of key ARS affiliates (reftel) along with the passing of sharia law in Somalia has left the current members even more isolated than before. While individual members, such as Ambassador Hashi, wield a modicum of personal clout, collectively the group's stance might only resonate with the views of Somali diasporans disjointed from on-the-ground realities.
MCMULLEN